

# CENTER ON HALSTED ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT

## SAFETY TIPS

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AVP 24-Hour Crisis Line 773. 871. CARE

### PREVENTION:

- Hang out in groups instead of being alone, there's strength in numbers. Realize that no neighborhood is safe. Violence can occur in the city as well as the suburbs. Stay in well lighted, higher traffic areas is possible.
- Always stay aware of your surroundings and people in your surroundings. Stay sober and mentally alert if you plan to be out in public. Trust your instincts to avoid someone, cross the street, walk away, go indoors, etc.
- Stay focused while on the street. Consider how headphones, drugs, alcohol, emotional stress and discussion distract you from keeping safe. Asking for a light, change, or for the time of day is a common means of distraction used by street criminals just before committing a crime.
- Carry a noise-making device to sound an alarm if there is an attack. Have your keys in your hand for quick entry into your car, home or apartment. If you choose to carry mace or pepper spray, realize it can be taken from and used against you in an attack. If you carry chemical protection, be mentally prepared to use it and be informed on its proper use.
- Use caution when meeting people via the internet, email or classified ads. Always meet in a public space the first time and realize that at any point you feel uncomfortable, you can say no to further activity. Be aware of the risks taken when you socialize (go home) with a stranger.
- If you go home with a stranger, introduce that person to your friends beforehand. If your cell phone is equipped with a camera, take a picture of him/her and email it to a friend. Let your friend(s) know the time frame you plan to spend with that person, and ask them to be concerned about you (and perhaps call the police) in the event you are missing for too long.

- To avoid sexual assault, watch out for date rape drugs that can affect your mental awareness if they are added to your drink. Get your own drink, hold on to it at all times (even in restrooms) and stop drinking immediately if you notice odd side effects.

#### **IF YOU ARE CONFRONTED BY VIOLENCE:**

- Prioritize your safety. Get away from whoever is hurting you. It's ok to run in order to protect yourself. If you are attacked, protect your head, eyes and midsection. If you are hurt, or have suffered injury to your head, get medical attention.
- Emergency rooms should not turn away victims of violence. The Illinois Attorney General's Office has a program (Crime Victim's Compensation) which may reimburse victims of violent crime for medical costs.
- **Get support from friends and family you can trust and count on.**
- Write a detailed narrative of the incident ASAP in order to keep details accurate. Call the police if you want to press charges. Call the **AVP 24-Hour Crisis Line 773.871.CARE (2273)** for documentation, referrals, information and support. Don't blame yourself for someone else's violent behavior.
- Remember, no one has the right to hurt you, not your partner, family, the police, a stranger, co-worker or landlord. The State of Illinois has inclusive domestic violence, sexual assault and hate crime laws which protect LGBT people.

#### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

Since 1988, Center on Halsted Anti-Violence Project (AVP) has provided crisis counseling, information and referrals, and legal advocacy to victims of violence and discrimination. AVP advocates for fair and sensitive treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and HIV positive or living with AIDS (LGBTH) victims by service providers, law enforcement and the community at large. AVP operates Illinois' only 24-Hour Crisis Line, **773.871.CARE (2273)**, which specializes in violence related crisis intervention to persons who are LGBTH.

**All services are free and confidential.**

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